

“Judgment has Arrived”
2 Kings 23:26-7; 24:1-4, 11-14
(Preached at Trinity, November 20, 2022)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Josiah's life and reign as the King of Judah can only be described as extraordinary. He served God faithfully. He set his heart on removing from the land all that did not honor God. But this did not remove God's wrath upon the nation. They followed after the abominations of the Northern Kingdom. Manasseh's sins were more heinous than all before him. We read in **Chapter 23**:
2 Kings 23:26-27 NAU - "However, the LORD did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath with which His anger burned against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him. ²⁷ The LORD said, "I will remove Judah also from My sight, as I have removed Israel. And I will cast off Jerusalem, this city which I have chosen, and the temple of which I said, 'My name shall be there.'"
2. The fires of judgment were kindled and the clock was continuing to tick towards the end. God raised up the Egyptians as an adversary. This resulted in the death of Josiah. Josiah decided to engage the king of Egypt in war and it cost him his life. Sadly, there is no indication this godly man sought God's direction in this decision.
3. We will now begin the slide to Judah's destruction. Over the final two chapters the author will move quickly through the final four kings covering a period of 22 years—Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah—and then it's over.
Upon Josiah's death, the land again turned to wickedness. Josiah's son, Jehoahaz, was 23 years old when he came to the throne and he only reigned for three months, but his was sufficient time to define his reign.
2 Kings 23:31-32 NAU - "Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. ³² He did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done."
4. After three months the king of Egypt replaced him with his brother, Eliakim, whose name was changed to Jehoiakim. He reigned for eleven years and like his brother, continued to advance evil in the land.
2 Kings 23:37 NAU - "He did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done."
5. By the time we enter **Chapter 24** Nebuchadnezzar enters the scene.
Just as He had said, God raised up an enemy to judge His rebellious people.
2 Kings 24:2-4 NAU - "The LORD sent against him bands of Chaldeans, bands of Arameans, bands of Moabites, and bands of Ammonites. So He sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD which He had spoken through His servants the prophets. ³ Surely at the command of the LORD it came upon Judah, to remove *them* from His sight because of the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, ⁴ and also for the innocent blood which he shed, for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; and the LORD would not forgive."

6. After the death of Jehoiakim, his son Jehoiachin came to the throne. Like Josiah's son, Jehoahaz, Jehoiachin also lasted only three months. Only one king remaining.
2 Kings 24:6 NAU - "So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers, and Jehoiachin his son became king in his place."
7. With Jehoiachin it was once again, "like father, like son."
2 Kings 24:8-9 NAU - "Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Nehushta the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. ⁹ He did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done."
8. The land was under siege. It was a dreadful time.
2 Kings 24:10-11 NAU - "At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon went up to Jerusalem, and the city came under siege. ¹¹ And Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon came to the city, while his servants were besieging it."
Jeremiah warned them.
Jeremiah 21:4-6 NAU - "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, "Behold, I am about to turn back the weapons of war which are in your hands, with which you are warring against the king of Babylon and the Chaldeans who are besieging you outside the wall; and I will gather them into the center of this city. ⁵ "I Myself will war against you with an outstretched hand and a mighty arm, even in anger and wrath and great indignation. ⁶ "I will also strike down the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast; they will die of a great pestilence."
9. Jehoiachin reigned for only three months, but it was long enough to deliver Jerusalem over to the Babylonians. He surrendered to the Babylonians and was carried off to Babylon. The distance from Jerusalem to Babylon (modern day Iraq) was over 1500 miles. It was a distant land with strange customs and a different language.
10. With Jehoiachin in exile, Nebuchadnezzar made his uncle, Mattaniah, king in his place. Mattaniah's name was changed to Zedekiah. Zedekiah was the final king over Judah. And this final king's reign was also evil.
2 Kings 24:19 NAU - "He did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done."
11. **Chapter 24** closes with the solemn reminder. All of this was happening according to God's sovereign hand, according to His divine judgment upon His rebellious people.
2 Kings 24:20 NAU - "For through the anger of the LORD *this* came about in Jerusalem and Judah until He cast them out from His presence. And Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon."
12. **Chapter 25** opens with the precision of God's actions.
2 Kings 25:1-2 NAU - "Now in the ninth year of his reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, camped against it and built a siege wall all around it. ² So the city was under siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah."
A. This tells us the siege of Jerusalem lasted two years. Two years without supplies to the city.
2 Kings 25:3 NAU - "On the ninth day of the *fourth* month the famine was so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land."
B. Finally, the army abandoned the city and fled. The Chaldeans occupied the entire region and began to pursue Zedekiah. Zedekiah's army abandoned him and he was soon captured.

- C. Zedekiah's sons were slaughtered before him just before they stabbed out his eyes. The last thing he saw was his sons being put to death. Zedekiah was 32 years old. His sons would not have been at most young teenagers.
13. Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, came to Jerusalem and set the Temple on fire along with the royal palace and all the homes in the city. The bronze pillars and the 11,000 gallon bronze sea were cut up and carried off to Babylon. Each pillar was 27 feet tall. They also carried off all of the utensils used in the Temple service. They then proceeded to tear down the walls of Jerusalem. The people were carried off into Babylon as exiles. The priests and officers of the Temple along with the king's advisors, scribes, and the captain of the army – sixty people in all were taken to Babylon and executed.
14. The poor were left in Judah to tend the land and Nebuchadnezzar made Gedaliah the governor, but he was soon assassinated. This led to many of the land fleeing to Egypt in fear of the Chaldeans. When Evil-merodach became king of Babylon, he freed Jehoichin from prison after 37 years. He was treated well for the remainder of his life.
15. Some final thoughts on 2 Kings.
- I. God's judgment is sure. God is faithful to His Word.
2 Kings 24:2 NAU - "So He sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD which He had spoken through His servants the prophets."
- A. Most people today don't believe this
1. They mock at the thought and ignore any accountability before God. It's like the mockery of the man on the corner bearing the sign, "The end is near." It is all just the rantings of madmen. Fallen men have always denied the judgment of God.
 2. In Noah's day people continued their normal, wicked lives right up until the final day.
Matthew 24:38-39 NAU - "For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away"
 - a. In other words, they were enjoying harvests and the bounty of good food. They were "eating and drinking."
 - b. They were also planning for the future – they were getting married. Fathers were giving away their daughters in marriage with the hope of a good life with her husband.
 3. Jeremiah warned of the destruction of Jerusalem but they refused to believe and sorely treated Jeremiah.
Jeremiah 26:7-8 NAU - "The priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the LORD. ⁸ When Jeremiah finished speaking all that the LORD had commanded *him* to speak to all the people, the priests and the prophets and all the people seized him, saying, "You must die!"

4. Uriah the prophet also warned of the coming judgment. They killed him.
Jeremiah 26:20-23 NAU - "Indeed, there was also a man who prophesied in the name of the LORD, Uriah the son of Shemaiah from Kiriath-jearim; and he prophesied against this city and against this land words similar to all those of Jeremiah. ²¹ When King Jehoiakim and all his mighty men and all the officials heard his words, then the king sought to put him to death; but Uriah heard *it*, and he was afraid and fled and went to Egypt. ²² Then King Jehoiakim sent men to Egypt: Elnathan the son of Achbor and *certain* men with him *went* into Egypt. ²³ And they brought Uriah from Egypt and led him to King Jehoiakim, who slew him with a sword and cast his dead body into the burial place of the common people."
 5. Jesus taught that people will also be living life as normal all the way to His second coming, without any fear of judgment.
Matthew 24:37-39 NAU - "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. ³⁸ "For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be."
- B. Denying the coming judgment does not remove the certainty nor diminish the severity.
1. People continue to mock with impunity.
 2. There is no fear of God in their hearts.

II. God is still accomplishing His redemptive purpose

- A. Judgment fell upon the Northern Kingdom with no mercy but perfect justice.
1. God had been long suffering with them. He postponed judgment many times. He sent His prophets to warn, but to no avail.
 2. Finally, judgment came, just as God had promised.
2 Kings 17:7-8 NAU - "Now *this* came about because the sons of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up from the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and they had feared other gods ⁸ and walked in the customs of the nations whom the LORD had driven out before the sons of Israel, and *in the customs* of the kings of Israel which they had introduced."
2 Kings 17:13-14 NAU - "Yet the LORD warned Israel and Judah through all His prophets *and* every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways and keep My commandments, My statutes according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you through My servants the prophets." ¹⁴ However, they did not listen, but stiffened their neck like their fathers, who did not believe in the LORD their God."
2 Kings 17:18 NAU - "So the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them from His sight; none was left except the tribe of Judah."

- B. In spite of the fury of His judgment, God remembered His covenant promises
1. Judah also suffered defeat and exile. They too denied the warnings of the prophets and persecuted them and put them to death.
 2. Instead of abandoning them completely, after 70 years, God caused a remnant of Judah to return.
 3. All this was to prepare the way for the Christ, who would save His people from their sins. God's people are those united to Abraham by faith. They are represented by the church today.
 4. In the Gospel God invites all men to repent of their sin and embrace the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who hear and receive the Gospel will be saved.

Conclusion:

1. We should tremble as we read of the destruction of Jerusalem, the city of God. But the glory has departed as we read with the birth of the grandson of Eli.
1 Samuel 4:21 NAU - "And she called the boy Ichabod, saying, "The glory has departed from Israel,"
 As dreadful as God's judgment upon Israel and Judah, we do not read that the Davidic dynasty had come to an end. This is the good news. The reign of David would find fulfillment in the everlasting reign of Christ. His Kingdom will never end.
2. As I stated at the beginning of this series that included 1&2 Samuel and 1&2 Kings, I'll now take you to the Book of Micah as a conclusion of hope in the Gospel.
3. Micah was actually written 100 years before Jeremiah during the reign of Hezekiah. Micah offered a message of warning, but also of hope. And this continues to be our message today.
Micah 4:1-3 NAU - "And it will come about in the last days That the mountain of the house of the LORD Will be established as the chief of the mountains. It will be raised above the hills, And the peoples will stream to it. ² Many nations will come and say, "Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD And to the house of the God of Jacob, That He may teach us about His ways And that we may walk in His paths." For from Zion will go forth the law, Even the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. ³ And He will judge between many peoples And render decisions for mighty, distant nations. Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they train for war."
Micah 7:18 NAU - "Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity And passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in unchanging love."